

case 1-429-221
December 13, 2012

SEWA-Rural

Introduction

It was 1980 and Anil and Lata Desai found themselves back in India after receiving their medical training in the United States. Along with a few close family friends, they were ready to bring to life a vision that had been in the making for the last few years. The Society for Education welfare and Action-Rural (SR) was founded on October 26th, 1980 in Jhagadia, Gujarat with a small maternity home converted to hospital, but with large goals to uplift the poor in the region. The organization has slowly expanded over the years. In 1982, the Community Health Project was launched with a mobile clinic and dispensary that visited nearby villages. Soon, in recognition of its good services, SR was entrusted with the curative primary healthcare needs of 39 villages.

In 1989, the state government formally entrusted the entire Jhagadia district to SR by designating SR as a Primary Health Center (PHC). The PHC is technically run by the government, but SR was the first in the region to be given virtually complete autonomy in the running the PHC. This was a test to see if a private organization could meet the government's expectations and work with the government to design new programs to achieve government goals. SR members had to negotiate with and educate government officials about what happened on the ground, and what actually worked. After many health statistics in the region had improved, the responsibility for running the PHC was taken back by the government, freeing SR to work on other projects. SR's novel ideas of non-government-organization/government partnership have resulted in international recognition and several grants from aid organizations. Today, the SR provides training for other organizations, government officials, and students on its health delivery model.

SR has since ventured into other socio-economic activities, including a women's empowerment institution, a technical training center, and tuition classes for school children.

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